FIELD XI: BRITISH AND AMERICAN WOMEN’S LITERATURE SINCE 1750
STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS
Revised: December 2018
Effective: January 2020

The committee expects the examinee to demonstrate scholarly expertise and acumen as well as cogent and cohesive argumentative skills. The examinee’s written arguments should highlight an awareness of critical issues while also exhibiting detailed knowledge of the texts on which they choose to focus. Potential approaches the examinee may wish to consider include:

- The difference between sex and gender; shifting definitions of “woman”
- Women’s contributions to literature; historical, cultural, and political contexts for these contributions
- The canon and the canonization process
- Variation in women’s experiences across nations, cultures, time, class, race, sexual orientation, etc., including the experiences of indigenous women and those in colonized or formerly colonized places.
- Intersectionality of race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality; interlocking oppressions and identities
- Standpoint theory; importance of location; situated knowledge
- Social construction of gender and sexuality
- Gendered construction of knowledge and social institutions
- White privilege, male privilege, heterosexual privilege, cisgender privilege
- Feminism/Womanism/mestizaje
- the history of feminism and women’s movements
- Major issues or “big questions” pertaining to women’s writing, eg. domestic violence, abortion, redefining motherhood
- Key figures and concepts in feminist literary theory, eg. Audre Lorde and Adrienne Rich
- The relationship between women’s literature and women’s activism/efforts for social change.

The examinee’s essays should include responses to each part of the exam questions and should demonstrate the following qualities:

- Clear and logical organization (introduction with thesis statement(s), presentation of argument and evidence, conclusion)
- Clear and grammatical prose
- Accurate information about primary texts, relevant literary criticism and theory, and historical contexts
- Logical and persuasive argumentation
- Engagement with and response to current issues in literary criticism
PRIMARY WORKS
Selections from the work of many of the authors listed below may be found in *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women*, S. Gilbert and S. Gubar, eds., a work that also contains useful background information, biographies, and bibliographies.

1750 – 1800
Adams, Abigail. *Letters*
Barbauld, Anna Letitia. Selected poems
Burney, Fanny. *Evelina*
Edgeworth, Maria. *Belinda*
Lennox, Charlotte. *The Female Quixote*
Murray, Judith Sargent. “On the Equality of the Sexes”
Radcliffe, Ann. *The Romance of the Forest*
Rowson, Susanna. *Charlotte Temple*
Smith, Charlotte. Selected poems
Wheatley, Phillis. Selected poems in *Norton*
Wollstonecraft, Mary. *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*
Wordsworth, Dorothy. Selected writings

1800 – 1900
Alcott, Louisa M. *Little Women*
Austen, Jane. *Emma or Pride and Prejudice*
Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*
Brontë, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*
Browning, Elizabeth Barrett. *Aurora Leigh*
Chopin, Kate. *The Awakening*
Dickinson, Emily. Selected poems
Eliot, George. *Middlemarch*
Fuller, Margaret. *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*
Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. "The Yellow Wallpaper" and “Why I Wrote the Yellow Wallpaper”
Harper, Frances Ellen Watkins. *Iola LeRoy or selected short stories*
Hopkins, Sarah Winnemucca. *Life Among the Paiutes*
Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*
Jewett, Sarah Orne. *Country of the Pointed Firs* or “The White Heron”
Schoolcraft, Jane Johnston. *The Sound the Stars Make Rushing Through the Sky*
Sedgwick, Catherine Maria. *Hope Leslie*
Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*
Stanton, Elizabeth Cady. "Address to the New York State Legislature, 1860” and "The Solitude of Self”
Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
Truth, Sojourner. Selections
Wilson, Harriet. *Our Nig*
Zitkala-Sa. American Indian Stories

Since 1900
Abu-Jaber, Diana. Arabian Jazz or Crescent
Allison, Dorothy. Bastard Out of Carolina
Alvarez, Julia. In the Time of the Butterflies, Saving the World, or How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents
Bechdel, Alison. Fun Home
Bishop, Elizabeth. Selected poems
Boland, Eavan. Selected poems
Brooks, Gwendolyn. Selected poems
Butler, Octavia. Kindred
Byatt, A.S. Possession
Castillo, Ana. So Far From God
Cather, Willa. My Antonia
Churchill, Caryl. Top Girls
Cisneros, Sandra. The House on Mango Street
Danticat, Edwidge. Breath, Eyes, Memory
H.D. Selections
Far, Sui Sin. Mrs. Spring Fragrance and Other Writings
Glaspell, Susan. Trifles or "A Jury of Her Peers"
Hansberry, Lorraine. Raisin in the Sun
Harjo, Joy. Selected poems
Hurston, Zora Neale. Their Eyes Were Watching God
Jen, Gish. Mona in the Promised Land
Kingston, Maxine Hong. The Woman Warrior
Larsen, Nella. Passing
Lorde, Audre. Selected Poems or Zami
Marshall, Paule. Brown Girl, Brownstones or Praisesong for the Widow
Morrison, Toni. The Bluest Eye, Beloved, or Jazz
Naylor, Gloria. Mama Day
Nottage, Lynne. Ruined or Sweat
Nye, Naomi Shihab. Selections
O'Connor, Flannery. Selections
Plath, Sylvia. Selections
Rankine, Claudia. Citizen
Rhys, Jean. Wide Sargasso Sea or Voyage in the Dark
See, Lisa. Shanghai Girls
Smith, Zadie. White Teeth or On Beauty
Silko, Leslie Marmon. Ceremony or Almanac of the Dead
Stein, Gertrude. Tender Buttons or The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas
Tan, Amy. The Joy Luck Club
Walker, Alice. The Color Purple or In Love and Trouble
Wharton, Edith. The House of Mirth or The Custom of the Country
Winterson, Jeanette. *Written on the Body* or *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*
Woolf, Virginia. *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, or *Orlando*
Yeizerska, Anzia. “My Own People” and “The Fat of the Land”

Each student must also choose **ten** additional works from the list below.

**1750-1900**
Brontë, Anne. *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* or *Agnes Grey*
Child, Lydia Maria. “Slavery’s Pleasant Home” and *Hobomok*
Cooper, Anna Julia. *A Voice from the South*
Davis, Rebecca Harding. *Life in the Iron Mills*
Edgeworth, Maria. *Castle Rackrent*
Field, Michael (Katherine Harris Bradley and Edith Cooper). Selected poems
Freeman, Mary Wilkins. “Revolt of Mother,” “Old Woman Magoun,” “A New England Nun”
Gaskell, Elizabeth. *Cranford* or *Wives and Daughters*
Johnson, E. Pauline. Selected works
Prince, Mary. The History of Mary Prince
Rossetti, Christina. Selected works

**Since 1900**
Adichie, Chimamanda. *We Should All Be Feminists* or *Americanah*
Ali, Monica. *Brick Lane: A Novel*
Allen, Paula Gunn, ed. *Spider Woman's Granddaughters: Traditional Tales and Contemporary Writing by Native American Women*
Angelou, Maya. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and selected poems
Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale*
Carter, Angela. *Nights at the Circus*
Edson, Margaret. *Wit*
Erdrich, Louise. *Love Medicine* or *Plague of Doves* or *The Painted Drum*
Ferrante, Elena. *The Days of Abandonment* or *The Neapolitan Novels*
Forna, Aminatta. *Ancestor Stones*
Hacker, Marilyn. *Love, Death, and the Changing of the Seasons*
Hall, Radclyffe. *The Well of Loneliness*
Hogan, Linda. *Dwellings*
Jones, Gayle. *Corregidora*
Kincaid, Jamaica. *The Autobiography of My Mother* or *Lucy*
Kingsolver, Barbara. *The Poisonwood Bible*
Lahiri, Jhumpa. *Interpreter of Maladies*
Le Guin, Ursula. *Left Hand of Darkness*
Lessing, Doris. “To Room Nineteen”
Lispector, Clarice. *The Hour of the Star*
Lively, Penelope. *Moon Tiger*
Lowell, Amy. Selected poems
Macdonald, Sandra. *Diana Comet and Other Improbable Stories*
Mansfield, Katherine. Selected stories
Miranda, Deborah. *Bad Indians*
Norman, Marsha. *Night Mother*
Obejas, Achy. *Memory Mambo*
Parker, Pat. Selected poems
Parks, Suzan-Lori. In the Blood
Petry, Anne. The Street
Piercy, Marge. Woman on the Edge of Time
Robinson, Marilynne. Housekeeping
Satrapi, Marjane. Persepolis
Schwartz, Christina. Drowning Ruth
Sexton, Anne. Selected poems
Shange, Ntozake. For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf
Smiley, Jane. A Thousand Acres or Ordinary Love and Good Will.
Smith, Anna Deavere. Twilight: Los Angeles or Notes from the Field
Trehewey, Natasha. Native Guard.
Van Clief-Stafanon, Lyrae. Black Swan.
Vogel, Paula. Indecent
Warner, Sylvia Townsend. Summer Will Show or Lolly Willowes or selected poems
Wasserstein, Wendy. The Heidi Chronicles
Welty, Eudora. Selection in Norton
Wertenbaker, Timberlake. Our Country’s Good.
Williams, Sherley Anne. Dessa Rose

SECONDARY WORKS
Students should consult with a faculty member in this area in choosing a representative sample of the criticism in this list. In addition, students are responsible for familiarity with the articles in Feminism(s), ed. Warhol and Prince, a work that also contains useful background information. A History of Feminist Literary Criticism, edited by Gill Plain and Susan Sellers, is also useful.

“Introduction,” “Spiritual Bildung: The Beautiful Soul as Paradigm” (Hirsch), and “The Novel of Awakening” (Rosnowski) in Abel, Elizabeth, et al, ed. The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development
Allen, Paula Gunn. “Kochinnenako in Academe,” in Feminism(s)
Anzaldúa, Gloria. Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza
Baym, Nina. Woman’s Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America. 1820-1870 and "Melodramas of Beset Manhood"
Boehmer, Elleke. Stories of Women: Gender and Narrative in the Postcolonial Nation
Bow, Leslie. Betrayal and Other Acts of Subversion: Feminism, Sexual Politics, Asian-American Women’s Literature
Badia, Janet and Jennifer Phegley. Reading Women Literary Figures and Cultural Icons from the Victorian Age to the Present
Berlant, Lauren. The Female Complaint
Butler, Judith. “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution” and “Imitation and Gender Insubordination”
Carby, Hazel. Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Novelist
Castillo, Debra. Talking Back: Toward a Latin American Feminist Literary Criticism
Castle, Terry. The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture

David, Deirdre. *Rule Britannia: Women, Empire, and Victorian Writing*

Davidson, Cathy. *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America*

Davidson, Cathy N., and Jessamyn Hatcher, eds. *No More Separate Spheres! A Next Wave American Studies Reader*

DuPlessis, Rachel Blau. *The Pink Guitar; Writing as Feminist Practice and/or Writing Beyond the Ending*

Farwell, Marilyn. *Heterosexual Plots and Lesbian Narratives*

Fetterley, Judith. *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction*


Gates, Henry Louis, Jr, ed. *Reading Black, Reading Feminist*

Gay, Roxann. *Bad Feminist*


Goeman, Mishuana. *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations*

Haggerty, George E. and Bonnie Zimmerman. *Professions of Desire: Lesbian and Gay Studies in Literature*

Haraway, Donna. *The Haraway Reader, selections*

Heilbrun, Carolyn. *Reinventing Womanhood*

Howe, Susan. *My Emily Dickinson*

Kelly, Mary. Revised (2002) introduction to *Private Woman, Public Stage*


Lockwood, J. Samaine. *Archives of Desire: The Queer Historical Work of New England Regionalism*

Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*

Mann, Susan Archer. *Doing Feminist Theory: From Modernity to Postmodernity*

Miller, Nancy K., ed. *The Poetics of Gender or Subject to Change: Reading Feminist Writing*

Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*

Newton, Judith and Deborah Rosenfeld, eds. *Feminist Criticism and Social Change: Sex, Class, and Race in Literature and Culture*

Ostriker, Alicia. *Stealing the Language: The Emergence of Women's Poetry in America*

Radway, Janice. *Reading the Romance*


Rody, Caroline. *The Daughter’s Return: African-American and Caribbean Women’s Fictions in History*

Saldívar-Hull, Sonia. *Feminism on the Border: Chicana Gender Politics and Literature*

Showalter, Elaine. * Sister's Choice: Tradition and Change in American Women's Writing or A Literature of Their Own*

Smith, Sidonie. *A Poetics of Women's Autobiography*
Smith, Sidonie and Julia Watson. Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader
Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America
Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. “Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism”
Spencer, Jane. The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen
Walker, Alice. In Search of Our Mother's Gardens: Womanist Prose
Woolf, Virginia A Room of One's Own